



S M D C / A R S T R A T
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Resuming our discussion on Army values and their importance to the men and women who serve as members of the United States Army, we come to the letter S in the acronym "**LDRSHIP.**" **S** is there to remind us of the importance of selfless service. Army Field Manual 6-22 defines selfless service: **Putting the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own.**

President John F. Kennedy summed up the concept of selfless service in his Inaugural speech in 1961, when he challenged Americans to, "*Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.*" As members of the United States Army, we all serve our great nation by supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States against all enemies. When members of the Army take their respective Oaths of Enlistment or Office, they are in effect giving America a blank check to be cashed as needed to protect the United States and its citizens. Selfless service means doing what is right for the nation, the Army, the organization, and subordinates.

Payment comes in many forms, each requiring selfless service by the Soldiers who signed those "checks." Over the course of an Army career, the Soldier will be asked to give up time with Family and friends in order to deploy to isolated and often hostile locations around the world. The Soldier will forego Family birthdays, holidays, and numerous special events in order to carry out the oath of enlistment or office — to support and defend the Constitution. Regretfully, selfless service sometimes requires the Soldier to pay for freedom through the loss of limbs or even life.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith performed the ultimate act of selfless service near Baghdad International Airport, Baghdad, Iraq on April 4, 2003. In total disregard for his own life, he maintained his exposed position in order to engage the attacking enemy force. During this action, he was mortally wounded. His courageous actions helped defeat the enemy attack, and resulted in as many as 50 enemy soldiers killed, while allowing the safe withdrawal of numerous wounded soldiers. Smith chose selfless service, he chose to place himself directly in harms way in order to save his fellow soldiers.

While the needs of the Army and the nation must come first, selfless service does not require or want Family- or self-neglect. Neglect of Family or self weakens the Soldier and can cause the Army more harm than good. The Army's commitment to the morale and well-being of the Soldier and the Soldier's Family are well documented in the signing of the Army Family Covenant by Army senior leaders — pledging to support Soldiers' Families while they defend the nation. The Army wants to provide Soldiers and their Families with a level of support commensurate with their level of selfless service.

Selfless service not only comes from our Soldiers, Army DoD civilians, supporting many of the Army's most critical missions, must embrace the same values. Many of the civilians currently deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have volunteered to serve there filling vital roles in support of Soldiers and combat operations.

Selfless service is not limited to combat or emergencies. Many individuals continue to place the Army's needs and the needs of the nation above their own. Retirees volunteer for recall, members of the Reserve components serve beyond their mandatory service dates, and Army civilians volunteer for duty in combat zones — all demonstrating selfless service.

SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!